Surára
Pakidái

/86 cont./

231 Dogs are never killed; they are allowed to live until they
[262] die of old age. When I asked whether dog meat was ever eaten
in former times, men and women, with horrified faces, answered
in the negative. Yet this custom is supposed to have prevailed
● [193] at one time among various tribes of Guiana (414). There do not

414. Alexander von Humboldt, 1860, IV, p. 189.

seem to be any myths about dogs.

123 I should also like to mention that during my months-long,
23 extremely friendly stay with the Surára and Pakidái, and in
[114] spite of great efforts, in which the Indians helped me, I never
23 succeeded in winning the affection of their dogs. It meant a
[114] good deal that in time I was tolerated by them. I can agree
perfectly with Friederici when he writes: "The Indian dog has
always hated the white man, and, conversely, the dog of the
European, the Indian. The odors given off by the races are so
different that even a human nose can usually tell the difference,
how much more a dog. If a white man walked through an Indian
camp he usually had a whole pack of growling and teeth-baring
dogs behind him" (415). But I also found that the opposite was

415. Friederici, 1899, p. 365.

true. The dogs kept at the Indian protection post Ajuricaba on
the middle Demini, mongrels of the most diverse breeds, but
among them also former Indian dogs, behaved, in their hatred, as
though they were mad when Pakidái families came to visit (416).

[191]

416. Baldus, on the occasion of his Chaco expedition, also observed that Indian dogs, once they are in the hands of whites, become the bitterest enemies of their former masters (Baldus, 1931, p. 18).

Surára
Pakidái
Waica

776
184 /93 cont./ Thus, Poré is brought into relationship with the moon--
821 Perimbó -- and with the latter forms an inseparable unity (450),

[114]
[171]

450. This conception, which seems rather strange and in which Josef Haekel therefore thinks he sees a contradiction (Haekel, 1959, p. 40), is, however, also confirmed for the Uitoto /Witoto/, for Preuss writes about it, among other things: "We thus have here the rare instance in which, through a combination of the god of the earth and a moon demon, a single deity has arisen, a sort of monotheism, alongside of which there are only very insignificant demons" (Preuss, 1922, p. 176). And elsewhere he states: "The fact that moon and Supreme Being here coincide may therefore have come about later, but not necessarily. Today we have them as an inseparable unity" (Preuss, 1922, p. 184).

whereas "Omaua," together with a helper, "Yoaua," lives in the western sky, where they too produce rain, in that they pour the water out of the two celestial rivers (451). In contrast to this

451. Zerries, 1958b, p. 280.

among the Surára and Pakidái it is believed that Poré shakes the rain-tree of the moon (see p. 199).

821 Great significance is also attached to the moon by the
184 Waiká, and, significantly enough, also in connection with the
● 773 creation of human beings. This may be seen from their legend of primitive times (452), which, except for minor deviations,

452. Zerries, 1958b, p. 280.

corresponds to the one which the Surára chief Hewemão told me

2: Becher--203 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surára
Pakidái
Waiká

821
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/93 cont./

(see pp. 247-248) (453). As a further parallel, the leg-birth

453. With reference to this, however, among the Waiká there is a second conception that the first human beings came to the earth in the rain (Zerries, 1958b, p. 281). Hence they must have come out of the western sky where, to be sure, Omaua lives and produces rain. Zerries, however, thinks it possible that this rain is identical with the blood of the wounded moon and refers to a Uitoto myth as a parallel (Zerries, 1958b, p. 281). In this myth the monthly blood of the daughter of the organizer of the festival of the animals is seen as a fine, cold rain, which Preuss interprets as the flood in miniature, which appears with the dark of the moon; it corresponds to the menses (Preuss, 1921, pp. 113-115).

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As a further parallel, the leg-birth should be mentioned. According to the Surára and Pakidái version, the first four men and a woman came from the leg of a small bird at definite intervals (see p. 247), while, according to the one of the Waiká, the first woman came out of the pregnant leg of a man (454) (455). Both myths, however, have

454. Zerries, 1958b, p. 280.

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455. Conceptions of leg-births are confirmed also for other South American tribes. Thus, among the Tukuna /Tucuna/ the tribal heroes Dyoi and Epi, together with their two sisters, spring from the knees, swollen by wasp stings, of the male Nutapa (Nimuendajú, 1952, p. 122), and among the Umutina, who unfortunately no

2: Becher--204 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surára Pakidái Waica

/93 cont./

455. (cont.)
longer exist as a tribal unit, it is believed that civilized people and hostile Indian tribes came out of the inflamed and swollen calves of the first man, Aipuku (Oberg, 1953, p. 108).

the polyandrous feature in common, for the woman had a boy (Surára and Pakidái) (see p. 247) or several children (Waiká)(456)

456. Zerries, 1958b, p. 280.

by the men.

/94/ In the religious world of thought of the Waiká one also finds ideas that are very contradictory. Thus, "Omaua" is regarded, on the one hand, as the Supreme Being and creator of the earth and of mankind, and, on the other hand, is thought of as an actual enemy of the Waiká who is closely linked with alien tribes in the west and with the whites, as well as with their pernicious influences, diseases, puzzling cultural possessions (motor, gasoline, etc.) (457). Furthermore, it is noteworthy

457. Zerries, 1958b, p. 286.

that in white and black magic "Omaua" is directly invoked (458)

458. Zerries, 1958b, p. 286.

(the Surára and Pakidái communicate with Poré/Perimbó only through intermediaries), and that there lives with him a cannibalistic creature, "Omayali," which, according to Zerries, presumably represents a hypostasis of the former (459). He believes,

459. Zerries, 1958b, p. 280.

however, that "Omaua-Omayali" is an import from another culture

Surára
Pakidái
Waiká

/95 cont./

796 171 exactly as among the Surára and Pakidái; moreover, the correspondence between the names Aboré and Poré is especially great. The supplying of cultural possessions is also attributed to the deities in each case. In the Warrau myth it is even said that Aboré fled before Wowtáh into the land of the whites, from whence he provided his fellow tribesmen with import articles (481).

481. Brett, 1880, pp. 84 ff.

794 171 The idea that there are gigantic prototypes of each animal and plant species also exists among other South American tribes. Zerries has already worked out the connections for this and has cited several investigators who confirmed identical or similar views for various Indian peoples, among them Arawak, Mura, tribes of the Chaco, Karaiben in Guiana (Arekuná-Taulipang /Arecuna/, Cavina and Tumupasa Indians of northeastern Bolivia, Cayapa in Ecuador, and Yaruro in Venezuela (482).

482. Zerries, 1951, pp. 149/50.

794 171 114 The conception of the Yaruro in particular shows corresponding parallels, according to Petrullo's description (483).

483. Petrullo, 1939, p. 237.

For the Karaiben tribe Arekuná, Koch-Grünberg, to be sure, does not find any evidence of gigantic plant spirits, but their idea of the animal spirits is very similar; here they are called "podole" = father (484).

484. Koch-Grünberg, 1923a, p. 187.

• 793 184 If one then compares the myths which deal with happenings on the already created earth, one is struck by the fact that among the Waiká the transformations of human beings into land animals cover a wide range (485). The same is true among the

485. Zerries, 1958b, p. 283.

Surára
Pakidai
Waica

/95 cont./

793 184 Surára and Pakidái, but here in addition there are also such for the animals themselves, and, to be sure, smaller ones are always transformed into larger ones (see p. 251). The myth of the creation of the ant bear, in which Omaua or Poré transforms a man who has committed incest with his mother-in-law into this animal by magic, is familiar to the Waiká (486), as well as to

486. Zerries, 1958b, p. 285.

the Surára and Pakidái, in the same version (see p. 250).

794 184 Likewise synonymous is the system of the species-spirits of animals and plants, hekurá (Surára and Pakidái), or "hekula" (Waiká) (487), which is closely connected with the medicine-man system.

487. Zerries, 1958b, pp. 286/87.

794 795 184 [124] Of interest, finally, are comparisons concerning the conception of the human soul. It can ascend to the moon (Surára and Pakidái) or to heaven (Waiká) (488) only if the corpse is

488. Zerries, 1958a, p. 105.

cremated, for its name, uwexík (Surára and Pakidái), or "nobolebe" (Waiká) (488) /see footnote above/, is identical with that of cloud, smoke. According to the view of the Surára and Pakidái, the soul exists in the bones (see p. 151) (489).

[171]

489. In this respect they correspond to many other tribes, for in his essay "Die Antropophagie der südamerikanischen Indianer /The Anthropophagy of the South American Indians/," Koch (Grünberg) writes: "All these practices show that the Indian, incapable of separating the physical from the spiritual, regards the bones, which alone remain after the corpse has decomposed, as the actual and ultimate seat of the soul" (Koch (Grünberg), 1899, p. 83).

4: Wilbert--68 E-4, 5 (1958) 1963 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

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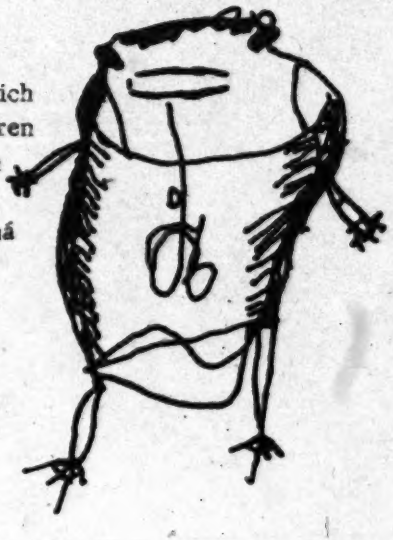

The female toad which saved the hero children from the persecution of the Great Jaguar. Drawing by a Sanemá Indian.

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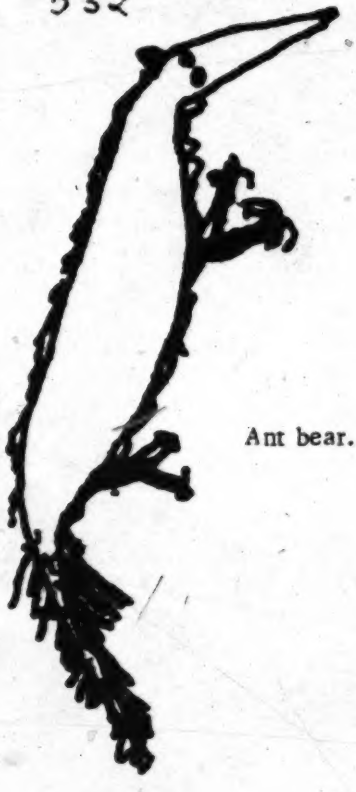

Ant bear. Drawing by a Sanemá Indian.

/212 cont./ We were greatly surprised to find this stratification among the Sanemá nomads, although it did not overwhelm us, since we were already aware of a similar situation among the Warao (Wilbert, 1957a).

The opinion most commonly held among ethnologists who have studied this matter[1] is that it is a matter of a Circum-Caribbean and Andean trait in what is related to the trilogy of priest, temple, idol, and that the existence of this cultural complex among the Warao would be an index of their decadence, owing to circumstances adverse to their culture. Regarding the temple cult itself, we also believe that it is a trait common to formative cultures and indigenous civilizations, but it is very probable that this temple cult is based on a very ancient platform of South American Paleo-Indian culture, which, by its specific conditions, lent itself to the development or to the adoption of the cult.

We do not think that anybody would care to argue that the Yanoama represent a degenerate people, for, if we admit authentic Marginals, the Yanoama are part of them. They have, however, the concept of a deified Cultural Hero, the author of all and constantly concerned with his creation. He is the cause, the beginning, and the end of all men and makes use of a priest as an intermediary between the earth and the sky. This personage is different from the shaman and his sphere.

The Sanemá do not have a temple cult, but their concepts of magic and religion are almost identical with those of the Warao where these primitive concepts serve as the basis for the cult. This basis, as we have proved through our investigations, is primitive and peculiar to the Marginals, and the identification of the superstructure as a cultural loan among the Warao makes it easier for us to understand the cult in that tribe. It is also certainly easier to explain the temple cult of the Warao if we consider it as a loan rather than as a cultural vestige of a society in decadence.

[1] [i.e., regarding the stratification of priest, shaman, and magician in the society -- An.]

The first menstrual period

/215 cont./

584 indicates that a man may have sexual relations with the wife
881 who was promised to him when she was still a child. Sometimes a girl will refuse to marry the man to whom she was promised as a wife, but she is afraid to conceal her first menstrual periods for mythological reasons.

881 In their oral literature the Sanemá tell of a very sad case
• 773 which occurred in remote times because a girl concealed her first menstruation. Oineitĩb, a scrawny dwarf, found out about what had happened and caused heavy rains to fall for a period which demolished the rancheria where the girl lived. All the men died. The young girl went away to live with the neighboring group, where she was greeted with unequivocal signs of friendliness. On the very day of her arrival a man went to the river to fish, when suddenly he saw floating on the water the dead bodies of the people of the rancheria recently destroyed by the heavy rain. He immediately realized what had happened. He returned to the rancheria and killed the girl. The dwarf ate the girl and all the people who lived in the rancheria destroyed by the rain. This happens very rarely, however, which is why the dwarf is so thin.

881 We do not know the content of the puberty rites, but it
[302] seems that the hair is cut in the case of both sexes, and, for the
[262] boys as well as for the girls, food is limited to cassava and water, and that in small amounts. They do not eat meat. An informant
343 from the Erebato spoke to us of a special hut where the women
841 remain for the duration of their menstrual period. If we under-
881 stood him correctly, this hut is round and dome-shaped and made of palm leaves stuck into the ground. Inside the hut there is a circle made of little sticks placed side by side, within which there are two sticks stuck into the ground one meter apart. Between these sticks is fixed a bejuco. /216/ The woman, who must not lie down during menstruation, sits down and the bejuco serves as a back support. We did not see any house of this type.

584 The arrangements for a marriage are initiated with a private discussion between the two young lovers. The boy indicates to his fiancée that he wishes to take her as his wife and says to her:

/221 cont./

793 [776 621] Since the Sanemá people cannot exist in good conditions without the continued and intimate contact with the house of Omao, sáiyawan, the priest makes himself indispensable in the grouping of a band, whose very existence is perpetuated in large part by the quality of the priest.

The hɛwĩawán of the Sanemá devotes himself exclusively to filling his high office. For this reason he cannot work, or hunt, or fish, etc. like a common man, and he lives on the benefactions given to him by the community as compensation for the services which he renders to it.

/222/ In his frequent flights between the earth and heaven he commonly kills a vulture or sparrow hawk and that explains why he often returns with his mouth covered with blood, bringing some cashew birds and, on certain limited occasions, even a human leg, trophies which he obtained as he killed the enemy (23).

23. It is likely that all this represents the ideal habitus rather than the real one of the priest.

793 ● 773 Before discussing the nature of the power of the hɛwĩawán, we shall first narrate the genesis of the first hɛwĩawán of the Sanemá, which will explain to us how it comes about that the hɛwĩawán is able to fly and why he always goes about raised some 30 centimeters from the ground when he is on the earth.

There was a man who one day went into the forest to hunt. There he was met by a Great Jaguar, omaukõhe, who is a gigantic jaguar, master of the other felines, and who goes about in an upright position like a man. The jaguar caught the man and ate all his flesh, leaving the skeleton picked clean but without breaking a single bone. The man remained alive and asked the Great Jaguar to give him other flesh. The Jaguar gave him other flesh, but told him that henceforth he would be hɛwĩ (bat).

[825] And from that time on the man hɛwĩawán is also a bat. He is a very timid man; children love him very much, because he never gets angry and does not scold. When he is in the company of men, he spends his time singing songs, wásámo songs, which

/222 cont./

793 the men learn because of the frequency with which he sings them.
773 He sings during the day, but especially at night. Suddenly he
[776] interrupts his song and flies up into the sky, where he joins other hɛwĩawán in order to sup with Omao.

793 The hɛwĩawán must jealously keep a certain number of
784 taboos, and on the degree of care with which he keeps them depends, not only his power as a priest, but also the existence of
[262] all his people. Thus, for example, he must not eat crabs or other animals which in reality are men to them, just like eagles, etc.

[778] Should he do this, the "weight of the dead" kills his hikuladɛ, a disaster which, in turn, causes the death, not only
[726] of the priest, but also of a large part of his congregation. For the same reason, the hɛwĩawán never takes part in war or in any combat whatsoever, because, although he is invulnerable and no arrow or club can kill him, his hikuladɛ could not bear the "weight" of a man killed by his weapons. This is the reason why each Sanemá local group relies on a special chief for wartime.

793 The hɛwĩawán, who belongs to the court of Omao more than
[776] to the Sanemá community, does not marry a specific woman.
[836] He may have sexual relations with all the unmarried women of the group, but he is completely unconcerned about them and the children. He has no duties as either husband or father.

/223/ If a hɛwĩawán dies, any woman of the group may
[776] have a son predestined to be a hɛwĩawán. No one knows which
[781] of the boys born in the period immediately after the death of a priest may be the hɛwĩawán of the future, but one day the true hɛwĩawán will return from the forest where he has met the Great Jaguar, who changed him into a priest, replacing his human flesh with other flesh more worthy of his bones, the flesh of a bat-priest.

[771] He than informs the people of what has happened, and, as that election happens shortly after the death of a priest, the new hɛwĩawán tries to take the vacant place in time, assuring, in this manner, the continuation of uninterrupted contact which the Sanemá have had with Omao generation after generation.

/224 cont./

793 778 628 [776] other, for they would begin to fight each other until one of them lay inert on the ground, exhausted and overcome. But they do not kill each other. Only in the house of Omao may all the hɛ̃wĩawán gather with their hĩkula-dĩb.

793 778 775 The hĩkula-dĩb of a priest act exclusively in his rancheria, in other words, in the rancheria of the priest who figures in the house of Omao as the representative of his particular terrestial community, and for this reason more than one priest is unnecessary. In the section of the illustrations[1] one can see the

532 793 778 775 126 hikuladɛ̃ of a priest, drawn by one of our informants. One sees there five hĩkula-dĩb, or souls of ancestors of the group in which the priest acts. The uppermost figure represents fever. In the center one can see a quadrangular figure which is a house. One of the beings who is inside it is the priest, but what can be seen on the left side is a coleopteran, a scarab. Under the house is seen the heart of the priest.

The informant, after having drawn the figure, insisted emphatically that we tear it up, and he suffered some anguish for having given it to us. After several days had passed, I took him the drawing in order to ask for more details and found him

532 793 778 775 126 825 calm and unworried. The reason for suffering this anguish is based on the belief that a Sanemá must never speak of the insect of the house of the hikuladɛ̃. As a matter of fact our informant never mentioned its name. I identified the insect as a scarab on the basis of the descriptions that he gave us and because it was not the first time that I had heard the scarab or other coleopterans mentioned as a supernatural being in South American ethnology.

171 ● 773 825 778 Such is the belief of the Lengua of the Gran Chaco, who affirm that the Great Scarab created the universe and peopled it with spirits and men. The Toba, also of the Chaco, call it payak, a name which means spirit; and it is interesting with regard to the hĩkuladɛ̃ of the Sanemá priest to note the Mataco custom of attributing a supernatural power to a maraca /gourd rattle/ with sacred beetles (Metraux, 1946d, pp. 350, 352, 353, 367). The similarity between the hikuladɛ̃ of the Sanemá and the "sacred maraca" of many South American tribes is very symptomatic.

[1] [see p. 70 - -Analyst]

/226 cont./

756 chest. They enter, without loss of time, through the extremi-
533 ties of the body and through the head. They arrive in the order
774 in which their names are sung by the master sablĭ, who in this way "builds a pueblo" of a microcosmos in the body of the man. The stronger the master, the greater will be the "pueblo," and the greater this "pueblo" is, the better chance the sablĭ will have to augment his inner world and his power during his life.

756 The hikuladĭ of the sablĭ is essentially different from that
774 of the priest, in the sense that it is inhabited by the vital princi-
[778] ple of vegetable and animal species and not by the souls of departed ancestors. The man also has a specific hĭkula, different from his soul and which, as is true of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, seems to be immortal and spiritual, essentially joined to animate matter until death. Each specimen of a species has a specific hĭkula; after death, the speciman goes to a luminous place in the forest. While the soul of a man may abandon the body during sleep, etc., without its being detrimental for the man himself, the hĭkula never leaves until the moment of death. Furthermore, the soul is typically human, while the hĭkula is found in man and also in plants and animals. Some informed us with insistence that women and small children do not have hĭkula.

• 773 Here is the story which explains the origin and the nature
774 of the hĭkula in the animate world.

[776] Chinanĭdmawan is a gigantic demon of dreadful shape, with long, sharp claws. He has skin which is impenetrable and as hard as rock.

/227/ One day Chinanĭdmawan came to attack the Sanemá. The latter posted themselves with their weapons to face his attack. Soon, however, the Sanemá realized that arrows and lances had no effect on the demon, who captured most of his enemies. Chinanĭdmawan quartered and devoured his victims, but kept the skins, which he nailed out on boards around and inside his house.

[171] (It is extremely interesting that this custom of keeping the skin
[727] of enemies has been preserved in Sanemá mythology, since it is reminiscent of some tribes of the Cauca, in Colombia, of the Mauta of Ecuador, of the Huauca of Peru, and of the Inca. It also recalls the cult of Xipe in Central America.)

/227 cont./

773 774 The Sanemá became discouraged in the face of the ferociousness of the monster and feared the day on which Chinanídmawan would again mistreat and kill them.

773 774 756 In those days there lived among the Sanemá a great sablí, very famous and extremely powerful, who began to think of how he could free them from this demon. The great sablí went off to the forest, and there he found a liana which seemed very suitable for his purposes. He cut a piece of the bejuco and returned. During the night he went to the house of Chinanídmawan in order to surprise him while he was asleep surrounded by his horrible trophies. In fact he did find him in a deep sleep; the sablí then introduced a piece of the liana up his anus. The demon woke up startled. He realized that a powerful sablí had found the means of killing him. In fact, shortly thereafter Chinanídmawan died, and the Sanemá exposed his corpse to the sun so that the flesh might rot. But because the demon had such tough skin, the flesh dried up and the skin remained intact; they then tried to burn it, but this was impossible, so they flung it into the forest and fled from the place.

773 774 The skin of Chinanídmawan, abandoned in the forest, gained access into the plants, animals, and men. That is why all male human beings, the animals, and the plants have within their bodies a hard and indestructible Chinanídmawan which is called hídkula,

774 [764] The hídkula is that part of the male which remains on earth after his death. When the body of a person is burned, his hídkula, on seeing the black cloud which rises from the fire, joins all the other hídkulas and they remain there for a long time... listening and listening to what comes from the world where men live.

[826] The size of the hídkula of a man corresponds to the measure of his torso, and the larger the hídkula is, the stronger is the person.

[764] [276] During the funeral rites, the men, under the influence of yopo, sing about their gigantic hídkula, and, in order to prove their gigantic strength, /228/ they invite each other to the wasamú, and they squeeze each other powerfully with their arms or with sticks. Among the men, only the priest, hɛ̀wíawan, has no hídkula, because he is already a citizen of heaven.

[793]

/229 cont./

774 The world of the "specific" hfkulas is found on the other side of the horizon and in contrast with the world of the souls. There the sablfes live forever, together with the dead animals and plants.

562 773 825 [774] It is worthwhile to refer once again to the insistence of our Sanemá informant from the Upper Caura regarding the fact that women do not have specific hfkula. He asserted to us, furthermore, that women have a different origin from men and that there still exists a purely feminine world, and that each Sanemá pueblo has its corresponding hanekasá. The informant would not identify the animal of which he spoke, but we knew [773] that it was of a well-known species. From the mythology one can deduce that the first men were made from a dead tree by the cultural hero brothers, while the first woman was fished out of a very large river.

Omao wished to metamorphose into women the butterflies which danced /230/ like people on the shore of a river, because the hanekasá are a pueblo of females in which there are only three males to insure reproduction. This pueblo of amazons is an exact replica of the female population of the rancheria neighboring a pueblo, in the characteristics of which we found a concept of alter ego for the Sanemá women.

[774] It is possible that there exists some relationship between [763] the hfkula and the male, for it is said that men die from the "weight" of the hfkula of certain animals; but we are not certain on this point (cf. Zerries, 1958b; Becher, 1960, p. 92). We are [763] more certain about the relationship which exists between women and the hanekasá animal, since a woman (of the neighboring rancheria) dies for each hanekasá which is killed. Other religious concepts which are difficult to interpret for the time being may also enter here.

791 755 A third type of theurgist which seems to exist in Sanemá society is the magician, the kášilala. He does not sing like the sablf and has no influence over the specific hfkulas or over souls. He is the curer of the organism, of the body of a man. He cures by uttering tremendous cries, gives massages on the ailing and painful limbs of his patients. Suddenly he will surprise all those

7 [See additional data on the hanekasá on p 113 .. Analyst]

/235 cont./

539 transformed into a peccary; only her feet were still human. All those who accompanied her belonged to a great herd of peccaries. The pôlawan offered to show them the way, and very early on the following day he helped them attack the enemy encampment. During the attack the man found his wife; he recognized her by her feet, which had still not lost their human shape. He approached her and, from the rear, grasped her upper lip with his right hand and her lower lip with his left hand, tugged violently, and ripped off the peccary skin, freeing her in this way from that repugnant disguise. The skin got up and ran away toward the forest. The Sanemá killed all the wild pigs, the men, the women, and the children. Pôlawan said good bye to them, and the woman returned joyfully with the men to the rancheria.

THE HANEKASA

• 773 The hanekasá are a pueblo made up, in its immense majority, of women. There lives among them only one man of verile age, which insures reproduction. Only female children are born, and, when the progenitor reaches an advanced age, a male child comes who replaces his father in this pueblo of amazons. The number of males may not exceed three: a child, a man in the prime of life, and an old man.

The hanekasá by preference feed on lapa /paca/.

For each Sanemá settlement there is a corresponding hanekasá one. When two of these groups meet on the road, they fight like men. The hanekasá also fight against men. If a man, while hunting, kills a hanekasá, a woman in the neighboring tribe will die.

HARAMI

539 One day a young Sanemá man was alone in the forest. He was looking for food. After walking a considerable distance without killing a single /236/ animal, he became very angry, complaining bitterly because the animals remained in their hiding

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema

Sempronio—this was the name we had given to an Auai boy who had elected to stay with us.

We made our way up the river of the same name which plunges down from the highlands, with wonderful falls, into a ravine thick with vegetation. The Shirians were strongly disinclined to go anywhere near the falls. It took us three days to overcome their objections and they only decided to go along with us when we told them we should otherwise set off by ourselves. Luis Antonio explained that the deep pool formed by the waterfall was the home of an enormous watersnake, *Lalakilpara*—a monster which lay coiled in readiness to devour anyone or anything it saw looking over the edge of the pool.

We laughed, but as far as the Indians were concerned our laughter fell on deaf ears. Luis Antonio was no exception, and he warned us not to jest about certain things. Numerous trails made by tapir and peccary were pointed out to us as paths the serpent had taken. One curious thing about the monster which remained unexplained was that he came regularly along the river-bank to the Kirisochi savannah for his excretions. But at last the Indians overcame their reluctance enough to make an inspection of the pool. Dumbfounded, they had to admit that Lalakilpara didn't exist, except as a highly coloured fiction among their older kinsfolk, who could recount the monster's whole history. It seemed to us that the power of fancy had transformed a few cross-currents driven furiously against the walls of the gorge by the whirlpool set up by the tumbling water, into this gigantic serpent whose breath—the air-disturbance—could suck down any man or beast who went too near the edge of the precipice. As to the distance the monster covered for purposes of nature, the symbolism here was even clearer: what it sought to explain was the way in which the river's alluvial matter found its way to the Kirisochi plain. The water was calmer by the time it reached this point, and the detritus carried along with it tended to be deposited here. This fable of the serpent was an example of a natural phenomenon stated in terms of myth—the only such example we found among the Shirians. After we had exploded the legend, Lalakilpara slowly died away in the Indain mind, his place being taken by the aeroplane and the outboard motor—monsters no less fantastic, and no less dread.

The slopes of the Sarisariñama range were very poor in wild life, as is often the case with these mountains, and Luis Antonio, to whom we had given a gun after he had proved himself to be a better shot than we were, was only able to get a Capuchin monkey or two. We boiled them—the result being a murky

*628 *621 602 583 past. Finally, there is no way of scoring 'promises' to exchange women, and the strength of the shoriwã tie between members of two distinct villages is largely a function of such promises.

*621 602 613 Summarizing the difference in agnatic and affinal ties, the important point is that affinal ties have the potential of changing in their coefficient of solidarity when exchanges between two descent groups continues over time. It is largely for this reason that villages reduce to clusters of affinally related dual organizations (paired patrilineal local descent groups) that have exchanged women in the past and will probably continue to do so in the future.

C. Ferocity and Bellicosity

• 773 828 According to the Yąnomamö Moon Myth, Uhudima, a Spirit, shot Moon with an arrow. The drop of blood that fell to the earth flowed over the surface, causing all Yąnomamö to become fierce. Ever since that time the Yąnomamö have behaved fiercely, because they were born in blood.

828 577 829 648 The Yąnomamö regard themselves as being violent, coercive, crafty and quick to display aggressiveness; they value this behavior. Yąnomamö contacts with other tribes and with civilized foreigners have been consistently hostile until about 1955. They have succeeded in exterminating one tribe,[1] and have caused a number of villages of another tribe to relocate in order to avoid the attacks mounted on them by

[1] The Makú; see Migliazza, 1965.

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Doing Fieldwork among the Yąnomamö

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THE YĄNOMAMÖ[1] INDIANS live in southern Venezuela and the adjacent portions of northern Brazil (see frontispiece map, p. iv). Some 125 widely scattered villages have populations ranging from 40 to 250 inhabitants, with 75 to 80 people the most usual number. In total numbers their population probably approaches 10,000 people, but this is merely a guess. Many of the villages have not yet been contacted by outsiders, and nobody knows for sure exactly how many uncontacted villages there are, or how many people live in them. By comparison to African or Melanesian tribes, the Yąnomamö population is small. Still, they are one of the largest unacculturated tribes left in all of South America.

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But they have a significance apart from tribal size and cultural purity: the Yąnomamö are still actively conducting warfare. It is in the nature of man to fight, according to one of their myths, because the blood of "Moon" spilled on this layer of the cosmos, causing men to become fierce. I describe the Yąnomamö as "the fierce people" because that is the most accurate single phrase that describes them. That is how they conceive themselves to be, and that is how they would like others to think of them.

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I spent nineteen months with the Yąnomamö,[2] during which time I acquired some proficiency in their language and, up to a point, submerged myself in their culture and _____ way of life.

[194]
[1]The word Yąnomamö is nasalized through its entire length, indicated by the diacritical mark [ą]. When this mark appears on a word, the entire word is nasalized. The terminal vowel [-ö] represents a sound that does not occur in the English language. It corresponds to the phone [ə] of linguistic orthography. In normal conversation, Yąnomamö is pronounced like "Yah-no-mama," except that it is nasalized. Finally, the words having the [-ë] vowel are pronounced as that vowel with the "uh" sound of "duck." Thus, the name Kąobawë would be pronounced "cow-ba-wuh," again nasalized.

[2]I spent a total of twenty-three months in South America of which nineteen were spent among the Yąnomamö on three separate field trips. The first trip, November 1964 through February 1966, was to Venezuela. During this time I spent thirteen months in direct contact with the Yąnomamö, using my periodic trips back to Caracas to visit my family and to collate the genealogical data I had collected up to that point. On my second trip, January through March 1967, I spent two months among Brazilian Yąnomamö and one more month with the Venezuelan Yąnomamö. Finally, I returned to Venezuela for three more months among the Yąnomamö, January through April 1968.

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villages have a profound effect on the nature of the settlement pattern of Yąnomamö villages, and that this same milieu influences the rate at which larger villages fission into smaller, vulnerable groups.

Finally, I emphasize the importance of cultivation in this pattern of village movement and relocation, particularly in the context of relying on allies. Twice during the history of Kąobawä's group they were obliged to take refuge in the village of an ally. All during my fieldwork the Monou-teri also relied on hospitality of this sort from Kąobawä's group, as they were beleaguered by raids from the Patanowä-teri and had not yet completed their new garden. In short, the fact that the Yąnomamö rely heavily on cultivated food has led to specific obligations between members of allied villages: a good ally is one who will take you in when you are driven from your gardens by enemy raids. The essence of political life, therefore, is to develop stable alliances with neighboring villages so as to create a social network that potentially allows a local group to rely for long periods of time on the gardens of neighboring villages. I will describe the politics of alliance formation in Chapter 4, as it intimately bound up with feasting, trading, and marriage.

Intellectual Environment

The comparative poverty of Yąnomamö material culture is more than compensated for by the richness and complexity of their theological concepts, myths, and legends.

One of the distinctive features of Yąnomamö cosmology and theology is the opportunity it provides for inventiveness. Individuals can and do modify concepts, embellish them, improve on them and, in general, use their imaginations when trafficking in myths or concepts of the soul and afterlife. In short, there is room for thinkers in Yąnomamö culture.

The result of this is that many variants of the same basic myth can be found over a relatively small area. Indeed, each village will contain people who tell the myth a slightly different way; the basic elements remain the same each time, but personal views are interjected and reflect the idiosyncracies of the narrator. The Yąnomamö appear to enjoy these intellectual exercises, for in myth and cosmology they are able to demonstrate their personal abilities as users of their language, the true language of man.

THE COSMOS The Yąnomamö conceive of the external world as having an origin, boundaries, supernatural beings, and a specific nature.

The cosmos is comprised of four parallel layers, lying horizontally and located one on top of the other (see Fig. 2–4b). They are like inverted platters: gently curved, thin, circular, rigid, and having two surfaces, top and bottom.

The uppermost layer is the "tender" plane: *duku kä misi*. At the present time, it is "empty" or "void" (*broke*), but some things had their origins there in the distant past. These moved down to other layers. Today, the uppermost layer is sometimes described as being "an old woman" (*sua pata*), a phrase used to describe an abandoned garden or a female who is no longer capable of producing offspring. This layer does not figure prominently in the everyday life of the Yąnomamö; it is merely something that is there and once had a function.

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The next layer is called *hedu kã misi:* sky layer. It is made of earth on the top surface and provides the eternal home for the souls of the departed. A complete replica of life on earth is to be found on top of *hedu*, except that the inhabitants are spirits of men, not real men. They garden, make witchcraft, hunt, eat, and in general do what living man does. Everything that exists on earth has a counterpart on *hedu*, a sort of mirror image, although the activities of the two groups of objects and beings are independent of each other.

The bottom surface of *hedu* is the visible portion of the sky. The celestial beings are attached to this surface and move across it. It is not thought to be very far above the earth, since many of my informants asked me if I had crashed into it when I flew in an airplane.

Man dwells below the sky on "this layer": *hei kã misi*. It originated when a piece of *hedu* broke off and fell to a lower level. This layer is a vast jungle, sprinkled with innumerable Yąnomamö villages. These are conceived to be located on earth, as shown in Fig. 2–4c. Even foreigners are thought to live in a type of house that resembles the Yąnomamö dwelling; after all, foreigners derived from the Yąnomamö by a process of degeneration.

Finally, the plane underneath this layer is almost barren. A single village of spirit-men is found here, the Amahiri-teri. A long time ago, after the earth layer was formed by a piece of *hedu*, another chunk of *hedu* fell down and crashed through earth. It hit earth at a place where the Amahiri-teri lived, carrying their village down to the bottom layer. Unfortunately, only their *shabono* and gardens were carried with the piece of *hedu*. Hence, the Amahiri-teri have no neighborhood (*uribi*) in which to hunt for game, and so they send their spirits up to earth to capture the souls of living children and eat them. There is a constant struggle between the evil spirits of Amahiri-teri shamans and the evil spirits of shamans on this layer, earth: They send malevolent demons against each other and preoccupy themselves with defending their respective villages from evil spirits.

The Amahiri-teri people lived at the time of the *no hadabö*, the first men. These original Yąnomamö were distinct from living man in that they were part spirit (*yai*) and part human. When they died, they became *yai*, spirits. *No hadabö* means, literally, "those who are now dead"; in a cosmological context, it refers to the time of the first beings.

THE FIRST BEINGS The first beings cannot be accounted for. The Yąnomamö simply presume that the cosmos originated with these people. Most of them, and there were many, had a specific function, such as creating a useful plant or object. They figure prominently in mythology. Many of them bear the names of plants and animals that are important in the Yąnomamö economy, and the first beings are considered to be the spirits of these. I will relate a few specific tales about some of these first beings, retaining where possible the Yąnomamö narrative style.

One of the first beings was called Boreawä, or simply Bore. He was the first to acquire plantains, the staple of the Yąnomamö diet. Because he had plantains first, he was the headman (*pata dodihiwä*) of the first beings. Boreawä did not tell the others that he had plantains, as he did not want to share them. At that time, the first beings ate only dirt and animals, as there was no domesticated food. One day another of the first beings, Horonama, got caught in a rain so he took refuge in a sheltered place in the jungle. He was lost and did not know whose neighborhood he was in. By luck, he took refuge in the very place where Boreawä had hidden his cultivated plantains. Horonama, a dirt eater,

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773 wondered what kind of strange vegetable food this was, so he stole some. At first he just peeled them and examined them, afraid to eat one. Horonama then sought out Boreawä and asked him how to produce these strange plants and what to do with them after they grew. Boreawä then instructed him in their use, the techniques of cutting jungle with stone axes, burning the fallen logs and brush, and planting the shoots of the young plants. Thus, because Horonama stole the plant from Boreawä, the others learned how to make gardens and no longer had to eat dirt.

Boreawä had a monopoly on many other cultivated crops, but one by one these were taken over by the others until all of the first beings were familiar with their use. [172] Today, when the Yąnomamö find stone axes in the jungle, as they usually do when they clear a new site for cultivation, they explain the axes as something that the first beings, Boreawä in particular, left behind for present man to discover and use.

Another of the first beings was Iwä (alligator). He and his wife, Bruwaheiyoma, were accustomed to go hunting together in the jungle. This was in the days before fire was known to Yąnomamö. Iwä, however, knew about fire and kept some hidden in his mouth. He refused to give fire to the others, so they had to eat their meat and insects raw. Only Iwä and his wife cooked their food in those days. The others decided to make Iwä laugh so that they could steal the fire when he opened his mouth. They made pranks to get Iwä to laugh, but he would not be amused. Finally, Dohomamoriwä did something funny and caused Iwä to laugh. When he opened his mouth, Kanaboriwä, a bird, flew into his mouth, snatched the fire, and took it up with him into a tree, After that, everybody had fire.

Haya (deer) also lived among the first beings. His daughter was married to Aiyakorari. One day Haya sent Aiyakorari out of the village to fetch him some *manaca* fruit from the jungle. Haya was at that time the only one who ate this fruit. He did not know, however, that Aiyakorari had a grove of peach palm, which he cultivated. Thus, Aiyakorari fetched some of his own fruit instead of the *manaca*. His father-in-law, Haya, was very angry over this, so he inhaled a pinch of snuff and began pulling the flesh from his calves up to his thighs. After this had been accomplished, he pulled the flesh of his forearms up to his shoulders and transformed himself into a deer. His wife did the same thing, as this was a propitious moment. Haya's daughter started to do the same thing, but Aiyakorari grabbed her by the hair and prevented her from doing so. Haya and his wife then bounded off into the jungle and became deer.

Omauwä is one of the first beings who figures prominently in a number of Yąnomamö myths. He and his brother Yoawä lived when Öra (jaguar) lived. Öra had a young son who was unable to speak. One day Aiyakorari's mother, Mamokoriyoma, cooked some of her son's peach-palm fruit and fed it to Öra's child. He got sick from eating the fruit and died. After he died, a sister of Omauwä then asked Mamokoriyoma if she could eat the dead child. "Mother-in-law, should I eat the dead child?" she asked. Mamokoriyoma then said, "Eat him." She took the body of the child, pulled a leaf out of the roof of the house, and used it for a dish on which to consume the child's body. When Öra discovered this, he was angry. As he himself was hungry for meat, he in turn ate Moyeinaiyoma, the mother of Omauwä and Yoawä, to get revenge. After he had done so, Yoawä shot him with an arrow and killed him.

Soon after that, the daughter of Rahararíyoma went to fetch water at the river where Omauwä and Yoawä were accustomed to catch fish. The two brothers found her

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there, so they copulated with her. After they quenched their desire for sex, Omauwä caused the girls vagina to be changed into a mouth with teeth.[10] Howashiriwä, another of the first beings, was sitting on the trail at this time, very hungry for sex. When Rahararioma's daughter walked by, he seduced her, but in so doing, lost his penis: her vagina bit it off. It was when this happened that Omauwä's son became very thirsty. Both Omauwä and Yoawä began digging a hole to find water to quench the boy's thirst. They dug the hole so deep that when water did gush forth, it caused a large lake to form and covered he jungle. Then some of the first beings cut down trees, and floated on them to escape the flood. Because this was such a strange thing to do, they changed into foreigners and floated away. Their language also changed into the tongue of foreigners, and gradually became unintelligible to the Yąnomamö. This is why foreigners have canoes and cannot be understood.

Many of the first beings were drowned in this flood. Those who managed to escape and remain Yąnomamö did so by climbing mountains. They climbed Maiyo, Howashiwä, and Homahewä mountains to escape the flood, Maiyo being a peak near the area where Kąobawä's village had its origin. Then Rahararioma, the mother of the girl whose vagina was changed into a mouth,[11] took a piece of red pigment and painted dots all over her own body. After she was completely covered with red dots, she plunged into the lake and caused it to recede. Omauwä then caused her to be changed into a *rabara*, a snake-like monster that lives in large rivers. After that, she caused Yąnomamö to drown when they tried to cross large rivers, either by eating them or by splashing large waves on them. Omauwä then went downstream and became an enemy to the Yąnomamö. Today he sends hiccups, sickness, and epidemics to the Yąnomamö.

It is because the foreigners refused to climb the mountains to escape the flood that they became enemies to the Yąnomamö. The foreigners tried to make friends with the Yąnomamö after the flood, but because their language was so different, the Yąnomamö refused to be friends. Today, however, the Yąnomamö are becoming friends with foreigners.

After the flood, there were very few original beings left. Periboriwä (Spirit of the Moon) was one of the few who remained. He had a habit of coming down to earth to eat the soul parts of children. On his first descent, he ate one child, placing his soul between two pieces of cassava bread and eating it. He returned a second time to eat another child, also with cassava bread. Finally, on his third trip, Uhudima and Suhirina, two brothers, became angry and decided to shoot him. Uhudima, the poorer shot of the two, began letting h.- arrows fly. He shot at Periboriwä many times as he ascended to *hadu*, but missed. People say he was a very poor shot. Then Suhirina took one bamboo-tipped arrow (*rabaka*) and shot at Periboriwä when he was directly overhead, hitting him in the abdomen. The tip of the arrow barely penetrated Periboriwä's flesh, but the wound bled profusely. Blood spilled to earth in the vicinity of a village called Höö-teri, near the mountain called Maiyo. The blood changed into men as it hit the earth, causing a large population to be born. All of them were males; the blood of Periboriwä did not change into females. Most of the Yąnomamö who are alive today are descended from the

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[10] In some variants of this myth she put *piranha* fish in her vagina. These fish bit off Howashiriwä's penis.

[11] There are many linguistic parallels between eating and copulating in the Yąnomamö language. The verb "to eat" also means "to copulate", the verb "to eat like a pig" also means "to copulate excessively", the adjective meaning "satiated, full" also means "to be pregnant." The context of the statement decides the meaning.

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793 [829] blood of Periboriwä. *Because they have their origin in blood, they are fierce and are continuously making war on each other.* This myth seems to be the "charter" of Yąnomamö society. It is the only one they repeatedly told me without my asking about it.

Where his blood was thickest, in the areas directly underneath the spot where Periboriwä was shot, the wars were so intense that the Yąnomamö in that area exterminated themselves. Where the blood had an opportunity to thin out, the Yąnomamö were less fierce and therefore did not become extinct, although they, too, fought continuously.

After this, there were only men. One of the men, a descendant of the blood of Periboriwä, was called Kanaboroma, not to be confused with Kanabororiwä, the bird who stole fire from Alligator's (Iwä's) mouth. One day his legs became pregnant. Women came out of the left leg, and men out of the right. These Yąnomamö were very *kirii* (docile, afraid) when compared to the ones who were derived from the blood. They rapidly multiplied and also contributed to the present population of Yąnomamö. All the present Yąnomamö came from the blood of Periboriwä or from the leg of Kanaboroma, or from a combination of both. The original beings all changed into *yai:* spirits.

794 THE SOUL. Yąnomamö concepts of the soul are elaborate and complicated. The true or real portion of living man is his "will" or "self" (*bubii*). At death, this changes
795 into a *no borebö* and travels from this layer to *hadu*, the place above where the souls of the departed continue to exist in an ethereal state, much in the same fashion as do the people on earth: gardening, hunting, and practicing magic.

The trail along which the *no borebö* travel forks after it reaches *hadu*. Sometimes, the Yąnomamö will point to the sky and explain that such and such a cloud is the *no borebö* of a Yąnomamö who is just reaching *hadu*. After the soul reaches the fork in the trail, a spirit, the son of Thunder (Yąru), Wadawadariwä, asks the *no borebö* if it had been generous during its life on earth. If it had been stingy, Wadawadariwä directs the soul along the path that leads to *shobari waka*, a place on *hadu* where souls of stingy Yąnomamö burn eternally. Most of the Yąnomamö I questioned on this asserted that they planned to lie to Wadawadariwä and avoid going to *shobari waka*. In general, they did not fear this place and were convinced that they would not be sent there. They expect Wadawadariwä to direct them to the trail that leads into *hadu* proper.

Another portion of the soul, the *no ubudi* or *bore*, is released at cremation. This part of the soul remains on earth and wanders about in the jungle. The children who die always change into this, as they do not have the *no borebö* portion that goes to *hadu:* It must be acquired. The reason that children do not change into *no borebö* is that their
794 "wills" (*bubii*) are ignorant or innocent (*mahode*). Thus, one has a character only after a certain amount of knowledge and experience are gained; with this, one develops a knowledgeable "will" and can expect to enter *hadu* in the form of a *no borebö*. Apart from
795 this, one is born with an *ubudi* (*bore*), which is invariably released at cremation and wanders eternally in the jungle after death. Some of these wandering *ubudi* are malevolent and attack travelers in the jungle at night. When they do so, they use sticks and clubs. The Yąnomamö usually use the name *bore* when describing the attacks of these malevolent spirits, although this is just an alternate name for the *no ubudi*.

794 825 NORESHI. Finally, each individual has a *noreshi*. This is a dual concept: One has a *noreshi* within his being, a sort of spirit or portion of the soul, and, in addition, an animal that lives in the jungle and corresponds to this soul. The *noreshi* animals are inher-